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Statement submitted by Fondation Ostad Elahi: éthique et solidarité humaine, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

In connection with Sustainable Development Goal 12, Fondation Osad Elahi, which has 10 years' experience of ethics education, particularly through Master's Degrees in Sustainable Development, emphasizes the importance of training business managers in the ethical aspects of their work.

In academic research, management ethics are increasingly recognized as a crucial factor in business sustainability, including the following three areas: economic development, respect for the environment and social aspects.

For example, whereas between 1980 and 1989 a search of the database Business Source Complete using the keywords "ethical management", "ethical leadership", "ethics of care" + "management", and "benevolent management" resulted in 198 hits from academic journals, there were 529 hits (+ 167%) between 1990 and 1999, 1,167 hits (+ 121%) between 2000 and 2009 and 1,719 hits (+ 47%) between 2010 and 2017.

Thirty years of research on human resources management show that ethical management (involving values such as kindness/appreciation of others, listening, open-mindedness, fairness, honesty, courage, etc.) has the effect of noticeably improving colleagues' individual performances (greater self-confidence, independence, sense of responsibility, loyalty, etc.) and collective performance (improved cooperation, less counter-productive behaviour such as absenteeism, better retention of information, etc.) and greater organizational citizenship (altruism, courtesy, conciliatory approach, etc.).

The organization therefore encourages scientific work dealing with the impact of ethical management on the sustainability of businesses and of their environment so as to contribute in an increased and more global way to a change of management spirit and methods.

This is why effective ethics training cannot simply emphasize rules and regulations. Experience has shown that these rarely have a real effect on behaviours and do not permit the development of ethical virtues, in which managers set an example.

One of the key aspects of management, on which academic training still places little emphasis, is how managers can identify in themselves a tendency to promote essentially individual or selfish interests to the detriment of the collective interest and how they can correct this tendency. If it is not overcome, it may gradually have unfortunate consequences and in the case of persons in positions of responsibility, such as managers of a business, have adverse systemic consequences and thus affect sustainability.

With this focus on self-knowledge and particularly awareness of one's tendency to promote individual or selfish interests and of how to overcome it, appropriate ethics teaching can foster the creation of sustainable production models. For this reason, the Fondation Ostad Elahi urges the members of the Economic and Social Council to encourage institutions in their countries to include ethics teaching in advanced management studies.